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**A Common Set of Core Values – The Foundation for a More Effective Joint Force**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

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## **Abstract**

Today, there is near absolute agreement that the future operating environment will require a force that is more joint, flexible, and integrated than our current military. Despite progress in jointness since Goldwater-Nichols, the U.S. military is not as joint and effective as the future-operating environment requires because it lacks a common foundation. A single set of core values would provide a common foundation and increase the military's effectiveness through a common identity, encouraging consistent moral behavior, and developing trust. Far from diluting the cultures and uniqueness of the individual services, a common set of core values would increase synergy amongst the services making the Joint Force more effective. The author describes the critical importance core values play in an organization's identity and the necessity of values to the U.S. military. He then discusses the history of core values in the military and the struggles the individual services have had in articulating their true core values. Finally, the author makes the case that because ultimately the mission of the U.S. military is the same, and because the military will be employed as a joint force in the future, the U.S. military needs a common foundation in a single set of core values.

## Introduction

The United States Armed Forces no longer fight as individual services but as a Joint Force.<sup>1</sup> From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the various service chiefs and the combatant commanders, there is a universal recognition and focus on the joint employment of the force rather than the traditional focus on service dominated domain warfare.<sup>2</sup> The engagements that the Joint Force finds itself facing require a force grounded in values—one that is fully unified, confident in each of its parts and able to act in the paralyzing environment of moral dilemma. According to military ethicist, Anthony Hartle, “the global scale of the conflicts the United States finds itself immersed in has generated new challenges and new moral quandaries that call for military professionals with wider knowledge, deeper insight, and stronger conviction.”<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, today, there is no unifying common set of core values that knit the separate branches of the Armed Forces together. Instead, each branch as well as the Coast Guard, Joint Staff, and Department of Defense has developed unique sets of core values in isolation from one another.<sup>4</sup> As a result, while significant strides have been made in jointness since the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the Joint Force is not as effective as the future operating environment demands.<sup>5</sup> Underscoring the critical importance of jointness on the future battlefield, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld offered this view in 2003,

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<sup>1</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington, DC: CJCS, 10 September 2012), iii.

<sup>2</sup> William T. Eliason, “An Interview With Raymond T. Odierno,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2014): 12.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony E. Hartle, *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 6.

<sup>4</sup> For the definition of core values and other terms used in this paper please see the Appendix.

<sup>5</sup> *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, U.S. Statutes at Large* 100 (1986):1008. Frustrated by the lack of jointness in the US military the Goldwater-Nichols Act was passed by Congress to force the military to operate in a more cohesive, effective, and joint manner.

“The outcome we must achieve [is]: fundamentally joint, network-centric, distributed forces capable of rapid decision superiority and massed effects across the battlespace.”<sup>6</sup>

At face value it appears that the U.S. military has achieved this state and now operates as an effective and fully Joint Force. In a 1999 address to the National Defense university to commemorate the ten-year anniversary of Goldwater-Nichols, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili gave the military a grade of “A” in *Effectiveness of Military Operations*.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in 2004, the Center for Strategic and International Studies published a report entitled, “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era” that looked back over almost twenty years to evaluate the U.S. military’s performance since the passage of Goldwater-Nichols. This report heralded the “dramatic evidence of recent American military prowess” and cited the dominant nature of the U.S. military in, “the invasion of Panama, the first Gulf War, skirmishes in Bosnia, the air campaign against Kosovo, the Afghanistan war, and the invasion of Iraq.”<sup>8</sup>

However, the report went on to state, “Yet a closer examination reveals some systemic shortcomings that need fixing.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, retired Marine General Bernard E. Trainor and chief military correspondent for the New York Times, Michael R. Gordon reveal the difference between true jointness and the U.S. military’s recent success on the battlefield. In their exhaustive account of Operation Iraqi Freedom, *Cobra II*, they describe that despite the heralded jointness of the operations the Army and Marine Corps essentially fought service

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<sup>6</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Transformation Planning Guidance* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, April 2003), “Secretary’s Foreword”, 1.

<sup>7</sup> (Gen.) John M. Shalikashvili, “Goldwater-Nichols: Ten Year From Now,” remarks at a symposium on “The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act: A Ten-Year Retrospective,” National Defense University, Washington, DC, 3 December 1996, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Clark A. Murdock and others, “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, March 2004, 18-19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

specific campaigns as they moved towards Baghdad.<sup>10</sup> These recent accounts reveal a perspective that the Joint Force still does not fight with the jointness the future operating environment requires. While there could be many reasons that jointness has not fully manifest itself in the operational effectiveness of the Joint Force, the lack of a common set of core values—one that provides a common foundation for all the services to start from—offers a compelling argument. So, while great strides have been made since Goldwater-Nichols to operate in a more joint manner, the Armed Forces should adopt a common set of core values in order to operate more effectively in the future operating environment.

### **Definitions and Scope**

The definitions of certain terminology used in this paper can be found in the Appendix.

The author will not attempt to propose a joint military ethic nor will he attempt to describe the membership of the profession of arms. The scope of this paper will be limited to examining the importance, history, and necessity of core values to the United States Armed Forces in the context of Joint Force operations.

### **Importance of Core Values**

Core values are not some new idea but rather are a time-tested means for effective organizational behavior. Organizational experts James Collins and Jerry Porras state that, “core values are essential and enduring tenets of an organization.”<sup>11</sup> The core values of an organization are the very foundation upon which everything else is built. Much like a house foundation, they must be true and level and cannot easily be changed without the resulting

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<sup>10</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General (Ret.) Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II* (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 2007), 321.

<sup>11</sup> James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, “Building Your Company’s Vision,” *Harvard Business Review*, 1 September 1996, accessed 15 March 2015, <https://hbr.org/1996/09/building-your-companys-vision>.

collapse of the structure that rests upon the foundation. Within the military the importance of core values can be ascertained simply by observing the prominent place they hold in the foundational doctrines of the respective services, attention given them by senior leaders, and the large body of scholarly work that declares core values essential.<sup>12</sup> Core values are important for several reasons. First, they establish both individual and organizational identities. Next, they aid in consistent moral behavior. Third, core values develop trust.<sup>13</sup>

### *Individual and Organizational Identity*

With regard to identity, core values provide the military with a clear identity and enduring character. They are foundational and prevent temporary leaders from changing the fundamental character of the Armed Forces. The capstone publication of the Joint Force, *Joint Publication 1*, makes clear the importance of core values by stating that, “US military service is based on values.”<sup>14</sup> This statement is further expounded by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in a White Letter to the Armed Forces in 2012 discussing the Profession of Arms. In that letter he stated that the Profession of Arms is, “anchored in our shared values” and that “we must continue to uphold and maintain the values that underpin our profession.”<sup>15</sup> Even more explicitly, the original publication of the Marine Corps’ *Fleet Marine Field Manual 1-0, Leading Marines*, published in 1995, stated it in this way, “These [core] values form the cornerstone, the bedrock, and the heart of our character.”<sup>16</sup> Core

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<sup>12</sup> National Defense University, “Strategic Leadership and Decision Making – Values and Ethics,” Chapter 15, Accessed 4 March 2015, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/strat-ldr-dm/pt4ch15.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Michael C. Herb, “Working Towards A Joint Ethical Framework And Common Core Values,” (research paper, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2013), 13,14.

<sup>14</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication (JP) 1 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 25 March 2013), B-1.

<sup>15</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *America’s Military – A Profession of Arms* (Washington, DC: CJCS, 2012), 3.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, *Leading Marines*, Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 1-0 (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1995) as quoted in Herb, 15.



values are the very essence of the character and identity of the Armed Forces. Without them, the military cannot hope to be the effective fighting force that the country requires.

### *Consistent Moral Behavior*

As far as moral behavior is concerned, core values are also necessary as an aid to consistent moral behavior. Given the solemn duty of protecting the American way of life and because it is entrusted with the power to take life, the values of the military should be the highest values and standards of society.<sup>17</sup> The need for consistent moral behavior within the military is articulated well by Lieutenant General Sir John Winthrop Hackett in a series of lectures he delivered at Trinity College in Cambridge, England in 1962. During these lectures, he argued that virtues while desirable outside of military service, are not functionally essential to those professions. However, virtues are absolutely essential in the military not only because they are desirable in and of themselves but also because they *increase military efficiency* (emphasis added).<sup>18</sup>

The service member, or service, that is grounded in core values is more resilient and is better able to negotiate the morally ambiguous, rapidly changing environment that is present on the battlefield and poses a severe threat to maintaining consistent moral behavior.<sup>19</sup> It is this ability to better negotiate the moral landmines of present and future battlefields that either contributes or detracts from increased military efficiency and effectiveness. One only needs to recall the immediate and strategic loss of effectiveness of the Joint Force in the wake of some negative moral behaviors from Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM such as: Abu Ghraib prison scandal; the

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<sup>17</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, i.

<sup>18</sup> LtGen Sir John W. Hackett (Ret.), "The Profession of Arms," (lecture delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, England 1962), 29-30.

<sup>19</sup> Hartle, 1.

soldier who killed 16 Afghan civilians in their homes outside Kandahar; and the Marine Corps scout snipers who urinated on dead Afghan corpses.

### *Developing Trust*

Finally, core values are necessary for the military to develop trust both within and without the Armed Forces. To be an effective fighting force, each member of the Armed Forces must trust their leaders and vice versa. The oaths that are taken by service members describe this contract. Whether officer or enlisted, each swears to subordinate themselves to the greater good of the country. In return, they expect that the other service members will also do so. Core values are the values that describe how service members actually subordinate themselves to the country. Without core values, each service member would be left to determine the means of service by themselves and without a common foundation, the effectiveness of the Armed Forces would suffer.

Just as importantly as the trust within the Armed Forces, is the trust that the Armed Forces must develop with the society it serves. The military serves only one purpose and that is to guarantee the security and independence of the United States of America.<sup>20</sup> The trust that the American public has in the Armed Forces is quite literally the lifeblood of the military. The performance and conduct of the Armed Forces should earn that trust and represent the interests of the American public.<sup>21</sup> The critical necessity for the military to embrace values is enshrined in U.S. law. Title X of the United States Code mandates “exemplary conduct” of “all commanding officers and others in authority” and requires them to “show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, i.

<sup>21</sup> Clark C. Barrett, “The Right Way. A Proposal for an Army Ethic,” *Military Review*, (November-December 2012): 4.

<sup>22</sup> Herb, 17.

These qualities are not inherent in people but are developed. Core values provide the foundation for the military to develop character in its service members and that character forms the bedrock of trust that America has in her military.<sup>23</sup>

### **Core Values in the Military**

Throughout the history of the U.S. military, leaders have seen the necessity of articulating values in order to provide a foundation for their troops to draw upon as they operate in what author Michael Walzer describes as, “the hardest place.”<sup>24</sup> During the colonial era, the U.S. military largely adopted the British Navy’s *Admiralty Instructions* of the day, which described in broad terms how a naval force should conduct itself and made specific references to the importance of character and honor. In the midst of the Civil War, the American Union forces instituted the *Lieber Code* that served as a guide for the conduct of Union forces. Later, this document would form the basis for both the Geneva and Hague Conventions.<sup>25</sup> While helpful, these codes stopped short of codifying a set of core values and instead focused on right and wrong behaviors. This adherence to sets of rules and compliance-based guidelines certainly has their place in the military but isn’t sufficient by itself. As the battlefield became more complex, each of the Armed Forces independently recognized the limitations of compliance-based rules and the criticality of establishing a strong foundation with core values to provide a common identity, trust and consistent moral behavior. Following the Second World War, the Army was the first service to codify its core values in the 1950s. But it was the highly publicized moral failures of the military in the 1990s that galvanized each service into codifying their own sets of core values between 1992

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<sup>23</sup> Daniel R. Simmons, “Core Values. Foundation for the Twenty-first Century,” Maxwell Paper No. 11 (Air War College, Maxwell, AL, 1997), 29.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977; repr., New York: Basic Books, 2000) as quoted in Hartle, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Barrett, 3.

and 1998.<sup>26</sup>

As a result, today, the Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and each of the uniformed services (including the Coast Guard) have published their own sets of core values. A total of six differing sets of core values. This begs the question, are these values truly core values of the Armed Forces or simply good values to have, or perhaps are they institutional values vice core values?

The knee-jerk reaction of the 1990s and a subsequent lack of a formal effort to institute a single set of core values across the Armed Forces has resulted in the individual services attempting to articulate the values that form the foundation of each particular service. However, using the Army as an example, these values seem to be less core values and more institutional values that have changed over time to address specific compliance issues within a service. For example, a *Parameters* article from 1998 points out that the Army's core values changed four times in a thirty-year period, from 1968 to 1998. Simultaneously, the number of values expanded from three to seven, eventually ending with a convenient arrangement of values that spell "LDRSHIP".<sup>27</sup> On simple face value one must question whether such a catchy acronym espouses true core values, or were values chosen so as to be easy to remember?

Dr. William Davis, an associate professor at the Army's Command and Staff College, argues that the values the military espouses in theory are not the actual values that are lived out by the service members. While the services seek to describe grandiose and noble values

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<sup>26</sup> A major example for each service is listed here. The Air Force suffered from a nationally publicized scandal surrounding the first female B-52 pilot, Kelly Flinn having an adulterous affair with the husband of an enlisted subordinate. The Navy and Marine Corps, from the 1991 Tailhook scandal where more than 100 officers were accused of sexual assault and other offenses as well as the 1995 rape of a 12 year old Japanese schoolgirl. The Army was castigated for the Aberdeen scandal in 1996 in which twelve commissioned and non-commissioned officers were charged with sexually assaulting their students.

<sup>27</sup> Brinsfield, 69.

for their service members to embody, in actuality they reward behaviors that run counter to those stated values. As an example, he states that it is ironic that senior leaders who identify integrity as one of the most important values to have, “hide behind the veil of non-attribution in order to speak the truth.” He concludes therefore, that the military suffers from cultural incongruence; their stated core values are not actually their core values at all.<sup>28</sup>

Another potential incongruence in military core values is that they frequently change. Remembering the definition of core values that Collins and Porras provided earlier, core values are “a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification.”<sup>29</sup> This would imply that core values do not change, or if they do, they change very slowly, certainly not four times within thirty years. The fact that the Army, Navy, and Air Force have all changed their core values over the years suggests the possibility that these values were not truly core values, but were actually institution values that have shifted over time. The frequency of change and variety of values of the service’s historic core value statements makes this point clearly.

The history of each service’s core value statements is quickly summarized. The Navy values prior to their adoption of “Honor, Courage, and Commitment” in 1992 were “Tradition, Professionalism, and Integrity.”<sup>30</sup> The Air Force listed six core values in 1993, before adopting their current three core values in 1997. The six values of the Air Force in 1993 were “integrity, competence, courage, tenacity, patriotism, and service.”<sup>31</sup> In apparent recognition that these values weren’t truly core values, then Secretary of the Air Force Shelia

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<sup>28</sup> Davis, 39.

<sup>29</sup> Collins and Porras, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Herb, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Gregory J. Dierker, “Core Values: A History of Values-Related Initiatives in the Air Force,” (master’s thesis, Graduate School of Logistics and Acquisitions Management, Air Force Institute of Technology, Air University, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, OH, 1997), 108-109.

Widall made the following comment at the 1995 Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics. “What I am looking for is a more compact set, something like three legs on a stool...absolutely essential for the correct functioning of the system.”<sup>32</sup> Out of this challenge were born the current three supposed core values of the Air Force. The two services that haven’t changed their core values are the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard. However, the codification of these values is relatively recent – the Marine Corps articulated theirs in 1992 and the Coast Guard in 1994. Even the relatively new Joint Staff has published at least two sets of core values. The first set was published in the 2009 edition of *Joint Publication 1 (JP-1)* and was comprised of “Integrity, Competence, Physical Courage, Moral Courage, and Teamwork.”<sup>33</sup> In 2012, with a new edition of *JP-1*, the current set of core values was established. The Department of Defense (DOD) curiously, has the least publicized set of core values. Unlike the Armed Forces, which enshrine their core values in their capstone doctrine publications, DOD’s are found buried among their web pages under the title “DOD 101”. They are initially listed as “leadership, professionalism, and technical know-how” but upon further reading, a second set is given for those in uniform: “duty, integrity, ethics, honor, courage, and loyalty.”<sup>34</sup> Figure 1 summarizes the current core values and groups them by like traits.

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<sup>32</sup> Sheila E. Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, opening remarks at the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics (FT McNair, Washington, D.C. 26 January 1995) as quoted in Herb, 23-24.

<sup>33</sup> Michael P. Manning, “A Codified Joint Professional Military Ethic: The Cornerstone of 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S. Military Transformation,” in *Fort Leavenworth Ethics Symposium, Exploring the Military Ethic*, ed. Mark H. Wiggins and Larry Dabeck (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC Foundation Press, 2011), 58.

<sup>34</sup> Department of Defense, “An Introductory Overview of the Department of Defense,” Accessed 2 March 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/about/dod101.aspx>.

Figure 1. Current Table of Core Values

DOD	duty	integrity	ethics	honor	courage	loyalty					
Joint Chiefs	duty	integrity		honor	courage		selfless service				
Air Force		integrity first						service before self	excellence in all we do		
Army	duty	integrity		honor	personal courage	loyalty	selfless service			respect	
Coast Guard	devotion to duty			honor						respect	
Marine Corps				honor	courage						commitment
Navy				honor	courage						commitment

Not only does each service have different core values, they define them differently as well. For instance, the Army defines Honor as “Live up to Army Values”<sup>35</sup> while the Marine Corps and Joint Chiefs of Staff define it as “The quality that guides us to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; never to lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; to have respect and concern for each other. The quality of maturity; dedication, trust and dependability that commits members of the profession of arms (Marines/Navy) to act responsibly; to be accountable for actions; to fulfill obligations; and to hold others accountable for their actions.”<sup>36</sup> A conclusion that could be drawn from this disparity is that the values were chosen to address specific institutional or compliance based problems.

A compelling counter-argument could be made that while the individual words and definitions of the various services’ core values are different, the underlying idea is the same. Each of the services subscribes to ideals that call for behavior that is essentially the same.<sup>37</sup> Proponents of this view would argue that each of the services simply has service specific means of instilling the necessary values in their personnel. The character and mission of

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Army, “The Army Values,” Accessed 17 March 2015, <http://www.army.mil/values>.

<sup>36</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, B-2.

<sup>37</sup> Hartle, viii.

each service is slightly different, so doesn't it make sense that the core values of each service should also be slightly different? Aren't the differences between the sets of core values really more superficial than substantive?<sup>38</sup>

While this might have been true in the service specific domain centric past, the problem with this logic is that the Armed Forces will fight current and future battles as a Joint Force. In order to be an effective fighting force they should have a shared identity, trust, and moral behavior that has as its foundation the same, not similar, core values. Effective communication and identity comes from a common, not merely a similar understanding. Additionally, the mission of each of the Armed Forces is the same, not similar, and that is, "defending the U.S. against all adversaries while serving the Nation as a bulwark and the guarantor of its security and independence."<sup>39</sup> The fact that the Armed Forces share the same mission and share the same joint organizational identity leads naturally to the conclusion that they must have the same core values. Some might find this easy to dismiss, but we must not forget the advice of Socrates. When discussing values, Socrates highlighted their importance, "This is not a trivial question; what we are talking about is how one ought to live."<sup>40</sup>

This is not to say that the methods of each service need to be the same but the core values should be the same. Innovation, technology, and the unique capabilities that the different branches specialize in will of necessity affect the means they use to carry out the mission. This does not mean that the core values of the branches should be different. Instead, the military's values must support and be linked with its purpose, not the means by

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<sup>38</sup> Herb, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, i.

<sup>40</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: The Modern Library, 1941), bk. 1, 32:d as quoted in John Mark Mattox, "Value Statements and the Profession of Arms: A Reevaluation," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 68 no. 1 (2013), 63.



which the purpose is fulfilled. Core values relate to the *why* rather than the *how* of each service.<sup>41</sup>

### **Necessity for the Joint Force**

Given the move towards operating as a Joint Force and the near universal recognition that the future operating environment will only be more challenging and demanding than today's battlefield, the necessity of a common set of core values becomes more important. Differences in the foundations of each service will be exacerbated and will manifest themselves at the worst possible time – when the pressure is highest on the battlefield. The fact that core values are imperative for our force is no secret. Current doctrine from the Department of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff is rife with statements concerning the necessity of core values. Among others, the Army Chief of Staff General Odierno, the former head of Central Command, General Mattis, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey have all made similar remarks that the military is “a values based organization.”<sup>42</sup> Noticeably lacking from all the interest in core values though, has been any guidance from the Secretary of Defense or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the individual services on developing a common set of core values for the Armed Forces. As a result, instead of a holistic approach to publishing a common unifying set of core values for the Armed Forces, the Secretary and Chairman have added to an already confusing array of supposed core values and core values programs.

The 2012 document, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (CCJO-2020) describes how the Armed Forces will be employed in the near future.

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<sup>41</sup> Herb, 30.

<sup>42</sup> Gen James Mattis as quoted in William J. Davis Jr., “The United States Army: Values Based Organization, but What Values? Utilizing competing values frameworks to identify cultural incongruence among field grade officers,” in *Fort Leavenworth Ethics Symposium, Exploring the Military Ethic*, ed. Mark H. Wiggins and Larry Dabeck (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC Foundation Press, 2011), 41.

Repeatedly stressed throughout the document is the idea that unique Service capabilities will be rapidly aggregated as a Joint Force anywhere in the globe in order to achieve “synergies and efficiencies not previously feasible.”<sup>43</sup> In order to achieve these globally integrated operations the Joint Force will need to, “form, evolve, dissolve, and reform in different arrangements in time and space as required with significantly greater fluidity and flexibility than do current Joint Forces.”<sup>44</sup> The required flexibility and interoperability that this concept outlines clearly describes a Joint Force that has a shared identity. The tempo of the future operating environment will preclude amalgamating an effective force from varying service specific values on the battlefield.

It can be argued that the current situation of six different sets of core values undermines the ability of the Armed Forces to fight as a joint force and diminishes the trust between services. Instead of focusing on the unity of the Armed Forces and their *raison d’être*, the different sets of core values place emphasis on what makes each service distinct from the others.<sup>45</sup> The Military Leadership Diversity Commission came to this same conclusion in 2009 and expressed it in their Issue Paper #6. They concluded that, “Core values provide a strong organizational identity.”<sup>46</sup> And that, “each Service brings to the table its own identity in the form of Service-specific core values.”<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly, a commission charged to promote diversity views this as a positive. However, these service specific value identities are actually hurting the development of jointness in the Armed Forces. In essence, the different core values of each service encourage service members to

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<sup>43</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, iii, 16.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Herb, 33.

<sup>46</sup> Military Leadership Diversity Commission, *Department of Defense Core Values*, Issue Paper #6, December 2009, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

elevate their service above the Joint Force – viewing other services with wariness. The identity of the service member becomes first to the service, and second to the Joint Force. This has resulted in a lack of evolution toward a joint warfare profession and decreases the effectiveness of the Joint Force.<sup>48</sup>

The importance a common set of core values gives to the effectiveness of a joint force can be seen by examining the Bushido code of Japan. This ancient Samurai code described in eight virtues (or core values) the foundation for how Japan's warrior class, regardless of "service", should conduct their professional and personal lives. Some of the virtues espoused by this code sound eerily familiar and timeless even today: "honor, loyalty, self-control, and courage."<sup>49</sup> These core values of Japan's warrior class laid the foundation for a common identity. The code instilled in the Japanese warrior a total commitment to serve the Emperor. The Samurai was a warrior for the Emperor and the country first and foremost. That was his identity.

Additionally, the code developed consistent moral behavior. Because the Bushido code was not diluted by numerous other codes or competition for allegiance, the Samurai internalized and lived by the code. This transformed their lives and provided a foundation for consistent moral behavior both on and off the battlefield.

Opponents of this view might argue that the bitter inter-service rivalry that Japan exhibited during the Second World War discredits the influence of the Bushido code to provide a common organizational identity. However, core values are not a panacea in and of themselves. Core values simply provide the foundation which can then be built upon. They

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<sup>48</sup> Don M. Snider, "Jointness, Defense Transformation, and the Need for a New Joint Warfare Profession," *Parameters*, (Autumn 2003): 18.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Clark, "The Bushido Code: The Eight Virtues of the Samurai," accessed 4 May 2015, [uschinaforum.usc.edu/getattachment.ashx?fileid=2177](http://uschinaforum.usc.edu/getattachment.ashx?fileid=2177), 1-6.

provide the *why* for the services but do not offer a solution for *how* the services remain effective. There must still be significant effort exerted to build upon the solid foundation that common core values offer. Without a solid foundation that addressed the *why*, the Samurai would never have been as effective as they were.

While advocating for common core values for the Joint Force might sound heretical to some and perhaps far-fetched to others, the author is not advocating doing away with the various service cultures. These cultures have great advantage and reflect the history and warfighting ability of each of the services. In leveraging the strengths of the various service cultures great synergy can be achieved to increase the effectiveness of the Joint Force. However, the foundation that the Joint Force is built upon must be the same. The identity of the Joint Force must be singular, not fractured by the services. No longer can services only operate within their respective domains or with complete segregation, this leads to mistrust when services are brought together. In the words of Army Chief of Staff, General Odierno, “We have to stay integrated because every one of those domains intersects at one time or another, and it’s crucial to have the ability to operate jointly when those domains intersect.”<sup>50</sup> By maintaining different core values the services cannot operate as effectively when they are employed as a Joint Force. The effectiveness of the Joint Force, and the ability to operate in the way envisioned by *CCJO-2020* will only be realized if the Joint Force is built upon a solid foundation, a common set of core values.

A modern day example perhaps illustrates this best. Today, it is widely accepted that the Navy/Marine Corps team is one of the most lethal, flexible, and capable organizations in the world. Why is this? Is it coincidence that these two services also share the same core values? The Navy and Marine Corps understand that they compliment each other. Despite

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<sup>50</sup> Eliason, 12.

having the same foundation, there is no dilution of the individual service cultures. Each service has a proud culture that while very different from one another, flows from the same source – the core values of “Honor, Courage, and Commitment.” Because the foundation is the same, the Navy and Marine Corps have developed a common identity as maritime services. They share the values and military justice system that promotes consistent moral behavior from their Marines and sailors. Finally, they share a trust that no other two services in the U.S. military shares. This degree of trust is not solely because of the common core values, but it couldn’t exist without them.

Many will undoubtedly point to the recent joint operations by the Armed Forces, such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq, as proof that the Armed Forces already operate as an effective Joint Force. While there has been much progress in the execution of joint warfare – the creation of joint commands, joint doctrine, and joint exercises – the Joint Force has not realized the potential that was envisioned in Goldwater-Nichols.<sup>51</sup> Using again the house analogy, a house can have walls, rooms, and a roof, but if it is not built on a solid foundation (or if it is built on six different foundations) it can never be as effective as the house built on a common foundation.

### **Conclusions**

While the U.S. military has successfully conducted operations in the past, the future operating environment requires a force that is more joint, flexible, and integrated. Given the fact that core values create a common identity, consistent moral behavior, and trust, it is more important than ever that the U.S. military adopt a common set of core values for the Joint Force. Only by establishing a common foundation will the U.S. military be able to realize the Joint Force that is as flexible and integrated as the future battlefield requires.

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<sup>51</sup> Snider, 17, 18.

Rather than doing away with our unique service identities and cultures a common set of core values would provide the foundation from which these would naturally flow in a synergistic manner. Each service would compliment the other instead of at best trying to understand their sister services, or at worst, competing with them. Much like the effectiveness of the Samurai or the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the Joint Force would have the necessary foundation to be the effective force that the future operating environment requires.

## Appendix

Certain terminology must be defined in order to ensure a common baseline for the consideration of the remainder of this paper.<sup>52</sup>

**Jointness** is used to mean the effective integration of the combat capabilities of the individual services that comprise the United States Armed Forces.<sup>53</sup>

**Ethics** is a branch of philosophy concerning the rules of right conduct; or, rules or standards governing a profession. Although this paper will not address ethics, ethics is a key element in the profession of arms.

A **profession** is defined as an occupation or vocation usually requiring advance study and specialized training. Samuel Huntington, renowned political scientist and author of *The Soldier and the State*, identified three characteristics as necessary for any activity to achieve the status of a profession: expertise, corporateness, and responsibility.<sup>54</sup>

**Core values** are those values that best describe and state the enduring standards, principles, and ideals of an organization.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Definitions, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *Riverside Webster's II Dictionary* and the *American Heritage Dictionary*.

<sup>53</sup> Snider, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Anthony E. Hartle, *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making* p.11. Discussion concerning Huntington's view on the military as a profession as summarized from Samuel S. Huntington. *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

<sup>55</sup> Herb, 7.

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